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Soybeans and Other Beans

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A radio discussion between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, Mr. E. J. Rowell, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and Mr. John Baker, Office of Information, broadcast Wednesday, May 31, 1939, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Program, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 104 associate radio stations.

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JOHN BAKER:

Here we are in Washington--celebrating the last day of May with real summer weather. And right here in keeping with the weather, in a cool looking green and white dress, is Ruth Van Deman.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

It's cotton, John. Don't fail to mention that.

BAKER:

By all means--one hundred percent American cotton.

VAN DEMAN:

Every thread guaranteed--except maybe this little bow or ribbon.

But, John, my notes for today are on food, not clothes. Do you mind if we hop, skip, and jump from cotton to soybeans?

BAKER:

Soybeans?--Very well. It isn't so much of a jump from cotton to soybeans at that. They're very good friends in the South, agriculturally speaking.

And maybe in addition to the soybeans you'd like to say a word or two about dried beans--the beans that have been officially declared in surplus?

VAN DEMAN:

I'll be very glad to. As a matter of fact, when you talk about food values for one member of the bean family, you talk more or less about them all--except that soybeans have the edge on the others in the quality of their protein.

BAKER:

The soybean protein is more like the protein of meat, isn't it?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, but the nutritionists don't consider any beans a real substitute for meat. They do say though that soybean protein is more efficient--can be used to better advantage by the body--than the protein of other beans.

And all beans are a very cheap source of energy and an excellent source of protein, provided they're combined with other foods in a well-balanced diet.

BAKER:

Ruth, that leaflet on soybeans got out by your Bureau - - -

(over)

VAN DEMAN:

"Soybeans for the Table"--you mean?

BAKER:

Has a picture of soybeans scattered **all** over the cover - - -

VAN DEMAN:

That's the one--Leaflet 166.

BAKER:

It mentions soybeans as a green vegetable, as I remember - - -

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, the table varieties. They're very good. Ever tried them?

BAKER:

I haven't had a chance yet.

VAN DEMAN:

How about a row or two in your garden?

BAKER:

Sorry, but I don't have the garden. And anyway wouldn't it be a little late to plant soybeans?

VAN DEMAN:

No. I called up Mr. Morse this morning to check on that.

BAKER:

William J. Morse, the man in the Bureau of Plant Industry?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, we call him the soybean man. He's been an enthusiast for years. He's done a lot to develop the table varieties. Our Bureau worked with him in giving them cooking tests.

Mr. Morse says that you can plant these table varieties of soybeans in the Central States up to the first of July. In the South you can do it even later--as late as the middle of August.

BAKER:

How do the green soybeans taste--something like limas?

VAN DEMAN:

No, they're richer. They have more fat in them, and not nearly so much starch.

By the way when we were speaking about food values a moment ago, I don't believe I said anything about minerals. All dried beans are rich in iron--and high in phosphorus and calcium. And I think you'll find them on one or two of the vitamin lists.

BAKER:

There seem to be a number of things packed inside the skin of a bean.

VAN DEMAN:

Maybe that's why the skin's rather tough ---

BAKER:

What's the best way to cook beans to make that skin soft? Seems to me I've heard something about putting a pinch of soda in the water.

VAN DEMAN:

You probably have. But that was before the vitamin experts got into action. They frown on that now. The soda destroys some of the food value--and changes the color and flavor.

It's true though that beans do cook better in soft water. I used to know a Bostonian who brought home spring water whenever she could to bake the Saturday night beans in ---

BAKER:

How far d' she bring it?

VAN DEMAN:

I was with her once when she brought it all the way from the State of New Hampshire.

BAKER:

No wonder Boston baked beans are famous.

VAN DEMAN:

Of course what really makes Boston baked beans famous is the long, slow cooking--hours and hours--with the salt pork and molasses--in a deep earthenware pot that keeps an even heat. As the juice cooks away more water's added--and ~~the~~ bean pot's covered except at the very last. Then the lid comes off long enough to brown the salt pork on top.

E. J. ROWELL:

Ah--that sounds like the real thing.

BAKER:

Mike Rowell, where'd you drop from?

VAN DEMAN:

He must have smelled the beans baking.

ROWELL:

That's it.

BAKER:

Now that you're here, Mike, give us the latest market news on dried beans -

ROWELL:

I can do it in a very few words. Supplies are large, very large. Prices are low. There's a great abundance of dried beans on the market.

BAKER:

That's why they've been officially declared in surplus.

ROWELL:

Yes, the production of dry edible beans has been increasing steadily in the United States since the early twenties. The total supply for the 1938-39 marketing season is estimated at around 17,600,000 bags.

BAKER:

100-pound bags?

ROWELL:

That's right, bags of 100 pounds each.--This last year's big crop, in addition to the carry-over, gives us a surplus of well over 3-1/2 million bags. That's over 25 percent in excess of the five-year average from 1932 to 1936.

BAKER:

Thank you, Mike, for giving us some of the background on this surplus of dried beans.

And, Ruth Van Deman, before you go away from the microphone, I want to check on that soybean leaflet. Hasn't it some good recipes, as well as information about food values?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, quite a few recipes. And it has the names of the garden varieties of soybeans--Agate, Easyclean, Rokusun--I can't remember them all.

BAKER:

But you'll send the leaflet to anyone who writes you a card.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, all that's needed is a post card saying "Soybean leaflet, please".

BAKER:

Maybe you wouldn't insist on the please?

VAN DEMAN:

No, soybean leaflet's all that's necessary, with Bureau of Home Economics, Washington, D. C.

BAKER:

And the address of the person who wants the soybean leaflet written very plainly.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, that can't be too plain, to suit the girls in the mailroom.

BAKER:

Well, thank you, Ruth, for coming over today. And just for good measure I'll repeat the title of this free bulletin on soybeans--Soybeans for the Table, Leaflet 166.

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